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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3958
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1775
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1642
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 2211
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2641
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0808

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000814

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/2018

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: RFE/RL REPORTER'S SON AT WITS' END
OVER HARASSMENT

Classified By: CDA Richard E. Hoagland: 1.4 (B), (D)

¶1. (C) Turkmenabat-based Turkmen Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reporter Osmanguly Halliyev and his son, Umid, told EmbOff during a June 30 meeting that Umid, who has been studying Arabic at the Institute of Foreign Languages, had just been expelled from the school. The Institute's action comes despite the fact that the boy reportedly was receiving good grades. Umid claimed that two men from the Ministry of National Security (MNB) had threatened several months ago to take action if he did not persuade his father to cease working for RFE/RL, and he sees his dismissal as the result of the MNB threat. Although Umid still has not received a formal letter of dismissal from the Institute, he sees no way that he will be allowed to go back -- or to enter any other institution of higher learning in Turkmenistan.

¶2. (C) Umid came to the Embassy looking for assistance to get into a foreign university. He said that he is aware that there are organizations that specialize in assisting individuals in his position, and wanted to request the Embassy's assistance in making contact with those groups. EmbOff told him she was unaware of any such organization, but promised to pass on his request to Washington, where others might be in a position to provide guidance. However, EmbOff also advised Umid to look for possible academic options on his own, rather than to wait for something to materialize. Throughout his son's recitation, Osmanguly Halliyev sat quietly, seemingly resigned to what had happened.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: As we have seen in other cases, official pressure on RFE/RL reporters often extends to family members. Part of the boy's desperation may be linked to the fact that he will be conscripted unless he can find an alternative university opportunity. Embassy would appreciate any information that we could pass on to Umid Halliyev to connect with those who might offer him overseas study/scholarship opportunities. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND